

EXHIBIT A

The Honorable Michael S. Nachmanoff
United States District Court
Eastern District of Virginia – Alexandria Division
Albert V. Bryan U.S. Courthouse
Alexandria, VA 22314

March 6
2023

Dear Judge Nachmanoff,

I am writing this on behalf of myself, Matthew David Rogers, asking for Your Honors leniency in my sentencing. As you read, I hope I can accurately paint a picture of who I am as a person today and show how the crime I have committed is out of character for myself.

Today, much like most other days, I've woken up feeling like I'm missing something in my sense of self. It's the reason people find purpose in being civil servants, soldiers, first responders, and doctors. Growing up as an Air Force brat, my mom instilled in me that sacrifice goes alongside honor, courage, and reverence. My family sacrificed a lot growing up, seeing that we bounced around to 6 different duty stations before I was in high school, I believe that largely shaped who I am. My earliest memories are watching the air force jets take off and land at Hill AFB in Utah. The fascination with planes began a chapter of my life. Two words, Top Gun! I watched that movie so many times my mom probably has the script memorized just from hearing me watch it. Planes! Planes! Planes! My mom got me books detailing every known airplane 1,000s of pages long. I memorized them. She created a monster because when it was time to go to her work functions, she didn't warn her squadron mates that it was just a ploy to a lesson on why the F15 is better than the new F35 (being given by a 10-year-old). Fast forward a bit and we're thinking about what I want to do with my life and it's only being a pilot, that's it, that's all I wanted to do. Traditionally most pilots go through the USAFA in Colorado Springs shouting the motto "Aim High" and unfortunately for me, I realized a bit too late in my academic career that grades were a tad bit important when getting into college, and so went the dream of being a fighter pilot.

With the dream of soaring above the clouds recently quashed and going into my high school years I felt stuck. I wasn't doing quite well enough in school to really consider a university and was struggling to find that purpose everyone talks about. I wanted to help people but wasn't sure how. It was also time to get a job, so I really didn't know what to do with myself. I was stuck on helping people. I couldn't shake it, now enter the United States Military. I wasn't going anywhere quickly when it came to figuring that out. I didn't want to be stuck on a boat and I didn't have it in me to become a Marine. The Air Force didn't really seem appealing unless you're a pilot so, Army it is. Again, I was picky, either medic or infantry for me, nothing less. Three months into that process I was told I couldn't pass a physical because of my concussions and it gutted my attempt at joining. Chapter closed, again.

Getting older and growing up sucks, now I have to get a job in some place that I really didn't like, and it just didn't sit well for me. My mom had talked about her co-workers' husband being a volunteer firefighter and it caught my attention. We set up a ride along and the rest was history. I got to be a firefighter AND got to keep my day job. I loved it, but the time commitments started eating at me, I

didn't really have time for anything so I kept looking. I had a friend in Georgia that worked for the Henry County Police Department that told me they were hiring, Naturally I applied. They asked me to come down to do all my testing and for my interviews. And I got the job. But slowing down and thinking things through really isn't my forte so I took my mom's advice and slept on it. With the tension in the world with law enforcement especially in an area with such a strained relationship with their law enforcement, I ultimately decided I didn't want to make that leap. I Kept volunteering here at home with my day job up until Covid ended that. Fast forward, re-enter the military. Now that sounded like my kind of place. You get to go out with a group of people that you take to be your family, you get to help people and affect change in the world. Went back to the same place as before and found out that my paperwork had been submitted incorrectly and I was in fact still eligible for the Army, I began processing. Paperwork turned in and accepted. I was on my way. Then, my past caught up to me.

Your Honor, my mom has been a rock in my life, all the while being a single working mom battling cancer and a successful career I'd say no one could've done better. Sure, I've been a disrespectful punk kid my fair share of times, but I have always been able to say she's been proud of me. That changed on May 21st of 2022, the day after the raid. When the dust had finally settled and the details of my newfound reality sank in, a look of disappointment crept upon my mother's face after she learned what my stupidity had caused. Then again on August 4th my life ultimately changed forever. That was the day I was arrested and charged with the unlawful possession of a machinegun in violation of U.S.C 922(o). It was a visceral reminder that your actions matter and the state of denial slowly eroded and left me to reflect on what had transpired the few years before. I had made the conscious decision to break the law for the fact of "oh that'd be cool" without fully grasping the ramifications that could follow. In this case it could mean my future. While I'm not exactly sure how to put into words just how much I regret the actions I had taken, I can only show with my character while on supervision and through my intent to join the Army that I am not a criminal. This is a small string of bad choices that have ultimately led to me writing this a hoping that you will grant me leniency in your sentencing.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Respectfully,

Matthew D. Rogers